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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBURGEOIS, DBENZE AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Asad/Mubarak Summit,  
Syria/PLO, Syria/Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq (6/23-25)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers highlighted the Syrian-Egyptian summit held Thursday between Presidents Asad and Mubarak that focused on the situation in the Arab region and bilateral relations. The opening session was attended by VP Faruk al-Shara and FM Walid al-Mouallem, as well as Minister of Information Mohsen Bilal. The meeting was attended from the Egyptian side by Prime Minister Ahmed Nazeif and Foreign Minister Ahmad Abul Ghait, as well as Minister of Information Anas al-Faqi. The two presidents reviewed the brotherly ties between the countries in all fields and means of boosting them. Both Presidents reiterated the importance of enhancing Palestinian unity and backing the inter-Palestinian dialogue, and renewed support for Iraq's stability and territorial integrity. Papers also reported telephone conversations between VP Shara and Mahmud Abbas, Chairman of Palestinian Authority, and Faruq Qaddumi, Chief of the PLO Political Department and Secretary of Fatah Central Committee. Both phone calls discussed Palestinian developments, progress of the inter-Palestinian dialogue and the need to make it a success.

On Syrian-Jordanian relations, papers reported a statement by Hashem Shabboul, Jordanian Ambassador to Syria, confirming that the Syrian-Jordanian Higher Committee was scheduled to convene in Damascus on June 28 and 29 under the chairmanship of PM Otri and Jordanian PM Maarof Bakhit. He added that the committee would discuss ways of boosting trade, investment and economic relations between the two countries. He said that the standing cooperation between the two countries covers all political, economic and educational spheres, pointing to the ever growing relations between the two countries.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"VP Shara discusses progress of the inter-Palestinian dialogue with Palestinian Chairman Abbas and briefs him on the outcome of President Asad's visit to Egypt" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/25)

"Presidents Asad and Mubarak confirm continuing consultation, supporting inter-Palestinian dialogue and backing Iraq's

territorial integrity. Foreign Minister Mouallem: We distinguish between resistance and terrorism; Opening a Syrian Embassy in Lebanon requires a positive atmosphere. Egyptian FM Aboul-Gheit: There is joint Syrian-Egyptian vision on HAMAS and the Arab initiative" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/23)

"951 Palestinian infants are martyred by Israeli crimes. Italy calls on Israel to stop its massacres. Israeli occupation troops attack Jennin and Southern Gaza" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/25)

"HAMAS refuses to prejudge the outcome of inter-Palestinian dialogue. Olmert at the Noble Prize Conference: Israel's borders are from the river to the sea" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/23)

"Lebanese criticism of the annual report by UN Assistant Secretary General Ibrahim al-Ghambari for ignoring the Mossad

SIPDIS network" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/25)

"Lahoud calls for finalization of the investigation of the Israeli network, so as to block the path of attempts to hide its truth" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/23)

"Minister of Information meets a delegation of Lebanese journalists: Syria encourages and blesses the national dialogue" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/23)

"PM Ottri reviews tendencies of development and reform plans with the Serbian Radical Party" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/23)

"Jordan's Ambassador to Syria confirms strong relations between Syria and Jordan" (Government-owned Syria Times, 6/25)

"Jordanian PM will visit Syria next Wednesday" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/23)

"Warnings against failure of the Iraqi National Reconciliation Plan" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/25)

"Five US soldiers killed in Iraq. Scores of Iraqis killed in clashes and attacks in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Basra" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/24)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"So We Do Not All Drown"

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Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/24): "The Syrian-Egyptian summit that was held in Cairo on 22 June was very important, at a time when the suffering of the Iraqi and Palestinian Arab peoples continues as a result of the aggression and flagrant terrorism practiced by the two strategic allies and partners in the aggression and its objectives, the United States and Israel....

"Talks during the summit dealt with the Palestinian and Iraqi files based on the Syrian-Egyptian and general pan-Arab concern for the interests of the Arab peoples in Iraq and Palestine and throughout the Arab world.

"The two leaders stressed their support for the unity and stability of Iraq and for the Palestinian national dialogue.... Arabs might differ over details, and their positions might not be fully identical -- although it is necessary and inevitable to have identical positions -- but they must never differ over the essence so long as this essence affects every Arab. Differences over the essence are fatal and destructive to all Arab countries, not only to this individual country or that. The danger does not threaten Syria alone. The experience of bleeding Iraq should prove to Arab brothers that they are all targeted in their existence, identity, and future.

"The Arab situation is unhealthy and perhaps in its worst shape since the fall of Granada.... There is a pressing need for Arab solidarity and a unified Arab strategy for the sake of coming generations.... This is an historic responsibility that all Arab leaders, and all Arabs without exception, must shoulder. History will not have mercy on those who turn their backs on their brothers, no matter what the reasons...."

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"Bombing the Future"

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Samir al-Shibani, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, commented (6/24): "The Zionist terrorism is deep rooted in history, and...the recent attacks in which Palestinian civilians were killed and wounded in Gaza came as no surprise.

"The astonishing surprise, however, lies in this horrible world silence about organized state terrorism that targets children.... Israel does not care about Kofi Annan's regret or about international laws, because it knows for sure that no one in this world can pressure or disturb it as long as it dominates the White House and as long as the aggressive US administration offers all protection, sponsorship, and support for this terrorism....

"This is a lesson for Arabs to learn before it is too late."

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"A US Witness Verifies"

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Ahmad Hamadah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (6/23): "US Ambassador in Baghdad Zalmay Khalilzad has sent a letter to the US State Department in which he painted a gloomy picture about the situation in Iraq....

"Although the entire world -- governments, humanitarian organizations, and research centers -- warned Washington and London of the dire and disastrous consequences of the occupation of Iraq and its destructive impact on the future of the Iraqi people and Iraq's establishments and infrastructure, Bush and Blair remained stubborn and invaded Iraq without thinking of these repercussions....

"Khalilzad's letter exposes to Iraqis, British, Americans, and the whole world statements previously made by Bush and Blair ....

"After all these testimonies, the pressing question is: For how long will Bush and Blair continue to try to beautify the painful reality in Iraq with slogans of democracy, human rights, and concern for the freedom and security of the Iraqis?"

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